Legacy
Steve Coerper

Foreword

Online Legacy

September 8, 2023

I began blogging on March 4, 2007 on Blogspot, and started a second blog on WordPress about three years later. Not surprisingly, I've written lots of posts on many different topics. The questions I'm answering with this post is, "*Which are the posts that address and clarify the most essential issues? Which posts would I most like for people to read?*"

Here are eight of them:

Reconciliation – looking squarely at the meaning of life
What Is the Gospel? – an uncluttered and jargon-free view of the essential message
Mad at God – Why some refuse God's offer of reconciliation
But … Do You Love Him? – a critical element of salvation
Adamantine Hearts – why nobody gets saved after the rapture

The Awakening Blast – for many Christians, the events following the rapture are academic

The Aischynō Option – considering the idea of a partial rapture

According To Your Faith – who decides who is 'worthy'?

The ***most critical issue*** is understanding the gospel of the Kingdom, which is God's initiative in allowing us to be reconciled with Him. I hope that these items clarify this issue. If someone rejects God's offer of reconciliation in Christ, they can at least understand what they are doing. My intention is to cut through the fog of misinformation offered by organized religion and point clearly to what God is saying.

Reconciliation

How often do you think about the meaning of life?

In our drunken college foolishness, we used to ramble incoherently (we thought we were funny!) about the "meaning of life." Sophomore indeed! We were "wise fools" without the wisdom.

I drank too much, quit college and joined the Navy.

But the meaning or purpose of life is THE substantial question. Get this wrong and nothing else really matters. Why *are* we here?

This is cut-to-the-chase. We are here to be reconciled to our Creator OR to reject His offer of reconciliation. That's it. All the discussions of "does God exist" or "is Christianity the only true religion" or "how can you prove the Bible is true" – all secondary or irrelevant intellectual pursuits. The desire to be reconciled, or the decision to reject the offer, is not a matter of intellectual pursuit. It's a heart issue.

Frank Turek famously challenges his questioners on college campuses with a great question: "*if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian?*" And some – in a moment of honesty that may even shock the person responding – say, "*absolutely not!*" And that's the disclosure.

The skeptic, the atheist, the agnostic, and even a lot of religious people, are simply not interested in being reconciled, at least *not on God's terms*. They may do their best to live what they think is a good, clean and moral life. They do their best. "*My good deeds will outweigh my bad deeds*" and so

forth. “*God doesn’t expect perfection – I’m only human.*”

God has offered reconciliation, and has told us what He expects and what He requires to effect that reconciliation. If one truly wants to be reconciled, the requirements will be recognized, understood and embraced. If not, then not.

Decide.

What Is the Gospel?

In the Lord Jesus Christ, and only in Him, complete reconciliation with God is now freely available. I'm starting with my conclusion. Everything that follows is for context and clarity.

Skye Jethani did a 44-minute YouTube presentation on ***What Is The Gospel?*** and used an approach that I found helpful, though I think he missed the mark in a few areas. His approach was to use the text in 1 Cor. 15 to identify the key points in the gospel message, and then illustrate using the gospel as it was proclaimed in Acts 2, 3, 4, 10, 13 and 17. His conclusion, distilled down to just four words, was "Jesus Christ Is Lord."

Now, there's a lot to be unpacked from this succinct statement on the Lordship of Christ, but let's face it: this statement on a tract or on a T-shirt does not effectively communicate the gospel. Skye identified five common elements in the gospel message: sin, Jesus' life, Jesus' death, Jesus' resurrection, and Jesus' Lordship. Neither heaven nor hell were mentioned.

Skye only considered Acts and 1 Corinthians, even though Jesus and His disciples were preaching the "gospel of the kingdom" from the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Their message was that the kingdom was near, and that repentance was in order; that is to say, "God is offering reconciliation." We read in Luke's gospel that after His resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples:

> "*Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,*

> *and that **repentance and remission of sins** should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*" - Luke 24:46-47 (emphasis added)

This commission makes repentance and remission of sins the centerpiece of the message. It presumes, of course, that those hearing the message are aware of their sin problem.

And that, I've come to believe, is closer to the real issue regarding evangelism. Paul stated in Romans 1:20 that all men are left "without excuse." Men know both from nature (Psalm 19) and their internal hard-wiring that God exists, that He has eternal power, and that He fully deserves to be thanked and glorified. We all KNOW we have rebelled against our Creator.

For those who acknowledge this, the gospel makes sense. God, in Christ, is reconciling the world to Himself. Jesus Christ is both willing and able to effect the reconciliation. For those who choose denial, the message of the gospel is foolishness, because their foolish hearts are darkened. People aren't unbelievers because of ignorance; they're unbelievers because of suppression.

We are called to be ministers of reconciliation:

> *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*
>
> *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God, for He made Him*

who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- 2 Cor. 5:18-21

I bring this up for several reasons. First, as His ambassadors, we need to be clear on what our message and assignment is. We are NOT expected to "win the world to Christ." The vast majority of people (Matthew 7:13) are not interested in Jesus or reconciliation with God. They don't even want to hear about it. Militant atheism has nothing reasonable to stand on, but they prefer ignoring God over being reconciled with Him.

However, their recalcitrance does not frustrate our obedience. It is NOT our calling to tell everyone about Jesus. We are to tell anyone who will listen that 1) reconciliation with God is available, and 2) that reconciliation is effected in Jesus Christ, by virtue of His death, burial, resurrection, and Lordship. If they reject this message at any point, they have been evangelized and we have still been obedient.

Second, Jesus said "*this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come*" (Matthew 24:14). The gospel of the kingdom is "*repent; the kingdom of God is at hand."* It's a warning and a statement of fact. This is not an "invitation to receive Christ" or a global altar call. It's simply the announcement that reconciliation with God is available.

Some have made this into a guilt trip for Christians, suggesting that because there are people you know who you haven't talked to about Jesus, you have disobeyed the Great Commission and your disobedience prevents the return of Christ. This sort of thing is spiritual abuse.

Finally, the main reason for our remaining here is to "grow up

in all things in Christ." (Eph. 4:13-16) There is a reason why we do not get "instantly taken home" as soon as we believe. Jesus deserves a mature bride, and spiritual growth takes time; for some of us, a LOT of time. We need to learn patience. We need to grow in faith when having faith is difficult or frightening. We need to learn obedience. We need to out-grow our own carnality. It is simply not God's will that we remain babies forever.

Taking the emphasis off maturity and placing it on evangelism has stunted the growth of the church. We think Christianity is a to-do list, and that evangelism is more like sales. We try to increase our Bible head-knowledge in order to be ready for any "objections" that a "prospect" might raise. Do you see a problem with this?

Preaching the gospel is NOT about "overcoming objections." It's simply stating that in Jesus Christ, and only in Him, remission of sins and complete reconciliation with God are now freely available. Evangelism adds the challenging question, "*what are you going to do about it?*" What they do about it is, of course, between them and God. By His grace, they will repent, be baptized, and submit to the Lordship of Christ the King in everything. If we are growing up in Him, evangelism will happen. Those who see Christ in us will be attracted, and the rest (the vast majority) will be repulsed.

Mad at God

The reason we are here is to make a decision: whether to be reconciled to our Creator OR to reject His offer of reconciliation. I suspect that many reject through hearts of seething bitterness.

- *My life has been nothing but pain and disappointment. Why should I want 'eternal' life? I just want it to end. I want oblivion.*
- *My life has been living a hell. If God were all-powerful, He could have done something about it. But He didn't. Spend eternity with Him? No thanks.*
- *God may be all-powerful, but He apparently has no love for me. If it were otherwise, my life would be better*.

The pain is real. It is the result of sin in the world; your sin added to everyone else's and compounded over 6,000 years. The complaint that God could have done something about it is an honest and legitimate observation.

But let's suppose that He does "do something about it." Suppose tomorrow at noon, God miraculously intervenes in human affairs and destroys every sinner, every evil-doer. Is that really what anyone wants, and especially any person who is estranged from God? If God were to destroy every sinner, would you expect that He would overlook you and your sin?

He wouldn't. In fact, because He is PERFECTLY just, He ***couldn't***. There are a few things God can't do: He can't lie – He can't learn (he already knows everything) – and He can't be unjust.

I'm not trivializing the life of misery you may have already

lived, and I'm not denying that it's been harsh. I'm also not promising that your miseries will end if you surrender your heart and life to God. What I am saying is that God has provided a way for you to be reconciled. His wisdom, grace and strength will then be available to you. You will be at peace with your Creator, and you will find peace in Him. In Jesus Christ, He offers you Himself as a future and a hope.

I want to be clear. I am not suggesting that God, or your reconciliation with Him, is a means to an end – that end (as appealing as it seems) being your comfort or the solution to all your problems. I'm simply saying that it is sin in the world, and NOT God or His hostility, that has made this world into the unpleasant place that it has become. God calls us to overcome, and then empowers us to do so.

This unpleasant world will not last forever. It is temporary and it is finite. Each of us will spend eternity somewhere. Deciding where and how one spends their eternity is a MAJOR decision. Have you thought about it?

God HAS acted, but His final judgment against sin and corruption has been withheld until you, and people like you, have had time to choose: either reconciliation and eternal life, or continued rebellion and eternal misery.

Choose wisely.

But … Do You Love Him?

My first church exposure after being saved was in my wife's home church in Racine, and they beat me up continually with their 5-step "plan of salvation."

Back then, and probably still, the "candidate" (I don't think that was the word they used) would come forward at the end of the service as the congregation sang the "announced invitation song" and then the minister would explain the 5-step plan (I understand some churches have added a sixth) and ask the candidate if he believed that Jesus died for him, etc. The candidate would say "yes" (then, as now, the minister did almost all of the speaking), and that one-word response was accepted as a confession of faith (Matthew 16:16), and then the minister would announce, "that confession brought death to Him but will bring life to you when you complete your obedience in baptism" (or something very similar).

I'm no mind reader, but I'm inclined to think many of these candidates were thinking *quid pro quo* – that "for this ONE act of public humiliation, I won't have my parents on my case any more and God will BE REQUIRED to keep me out of hell."

Such a deal.

As I said, I'm no mind reader … but I saw and heard lots of resistance to baptism (and still do!) and I saw little evidence of renewed minds or transformed lives.

My thought is that the "formula" is flawed. Paul boiled it down to one simple statement, which he gave in **1 Corinthians 16:22** –

If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be

accursed. (I would guess that “remain accursed” would be an equally valid translation. -scc)

How basic can you get? It’s right there: the delineation between blessing and curse. And yet I never heard any minister (or anyone else, for that matter) ask a baptismal candidate or new believer if he (or she) loved Christ and, if so, why.

I’m in no hurry to “do the deal” and get people to make “decisions for Christ.” As you know, there is no such thing in the scriptures. Men say (and especially at this time of the year) that “wise men still seek Him” but I doubt it. We don’t seek Him; He has come seeking us (Matthew 18:22). And according to Paul, “…not many wise…” (1 Cor. 1:26) are called.

His disciples LOVE Him. Because they love Him, they keep His commandments. His “fans” only want what Jesus can do for them (stay out of hell, acceptance in the Christian sub-culture, etc.); they don’t want Him. This is a distinction easily lost in evangelistic fervor, as you are no doubt aware.

So the questions we should be asking are: “Do you LOVE Christ? If so, why? If not, why not??

Adamantine Hearts

> “Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.”
>
> *Psalm 2:3*

I thought I was going to make the case that the so-called “end times revival” after the rapture was logistically impossible. Actually, it isn’t. God has done many “logistically impossible” things.

The reason there will be no revival is not because of God’s unwillingness or the difficulty in effecting salvation, but because the recalcitrant hearts of those unbelievers who are left behind will not be changed when the church leaves. They will still want to have nothing to do with God, repentance, or reconciliation. Those in rebellion against God during these last days before the rapture will remain rebellious after we leave. There will be no remorse, and your “left behind” letters will not find receptive hearts.

> The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception **among those who perish**, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
>
> And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that **they all may be condemned** who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
>
> *2 Thess. 2:9-12*

This is simple, plain scripture in context. This is what Paul told the Thessalonians about the coming of the Dragon. The "lawless one" and his associates will work "signs, and lying wonders" before a world filled with "those who perish," and Paul wrote that "they may ALL be condemned." Why?? We need not speculate: 1) they did not believe the truth, and 2) they had pleasure in unrighteousness.

I don't know how God could have inspired any writer to make it any clearer. God removes from the earth those who love and trust Him, and the rest (excluding those who exercise the *aischynō* option) are condemned. They don't get a "second chance" and even a third, fourth or fifth "chance" ***would not make any difference***.

We see disease and famine on the near horizon. We've just had over a year of government-inflicted lockdowns, business shutdowns and the rest. Now inflation is gearing up to unbelievable levels, the stores could be empty in the foreseeable future, gas could hit $10 or more per gallon before it's completely unavailable.

We've been told that a novel strain of corona virus is lurking in the air and on every horizontal surface, and it could strike you down and kill you at any time. And many people believe it! They are wearing their masks (even without mandates), social-distancing, avoiding large social gatherings and the rest. It's like a global make-believe leper colony. But are people repenting? Is escalating misery making people more open to the gospel?

And if not now, then why would we expect it in the future as life becomes even more painful?

In fact, people will blame God, curse God, turn from Him and refuse to repent. Hearts will become even harder. Explicit scripture bears this out:

> But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, **did not repent** of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.
>
> And they **did not repent** of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.
>
> And men were scorched with great heat, and they **blasphemed the name of God** who has power over these plagues; and they **did not repent** and give Him glory.
>
> They **blasphemed the God of heaven** because of their pains and their sores, and **did not repent** of their deeds.
>
> *Rev. 9:20-21, Rev. 16:9, 11 NKJV emphasis added*

There is not a single verse in Revelation saying anyone repented or turned to God or relented from evil. Not one. So a "task force" of 144 MILLION could not win this hard-hearted crowd. They have rejected the truth. God will send a strong delusion that they may believe a lie. He will give them what they ask for, and when they don't like the results, ***they will curse God and refuse to repent***.

That's fallen human nature.

You may be wondering, "*but then what about those 144,000*

Jews? If they are not global evangelists, then what do they do?" Besides them being sealed, all we know about them is in the first five verses of Rev. 14:

> Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They **sang as it were a new song before the throne**, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.
>
> These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who **follow the Lamb wherever He goes**. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.
>
> *Rev. 14:1-5 NKJV (emphasis added)*

They sing before the Throne of God, and they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. That's it.

Three questions remain. First, if there is no "tribulation revival" then why are so many "prophecy experts" insisting that there is? Second, who makes up the "great multitude" in Revelation 7:9? And finally, we clearly DO see believers on the earth after the rapture. Who are they?

Stay tuned.

The ‘Awakening Blast’

Why do I expect the rapture and the ‘dry bones’ resurrection on this coming September 18th?

Basically, my initiating conjecture is that when the seven feasts are ultimately fulfilled, the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ will begin, and that points to the final day of the fall feasts, or Shemini Atzeret.

The “bad guys” are talking about complete implementation of their plan of Global Corruption by 2030. I don’t take dates or data point from the bad guys, or the Simpsons, or “predictive programming” or even Strongs numbering. But I think 2030 is still a very likely year. So I am looking at Shemini Atzeret in 2030 as a candidate for the beginning of the Millennium. According to HebCal, that will be October 19, 2030.

If Daniel’s 70th ‘week’ is precise rather than just offered as a close approximation, then the seven years would be 2,550 days (including a leap month). So I counted back 2,550 days from October 19, 2030 and that’s this coming October 26th. This gives us a likely date for the “confirmation of the covenant” which, according to Daniel 9:24, is the initiating event for the final seven years.

That’s one possibility for the date of the confirmation. Another possibility (less likely in my opinion) is that the years are simply Jewish calendar years; that is, from any date in any year to the same date the following year would be a “year” regardless of the number of intervening days. So the ‘week’ ending on Shemini Atezeret in 2030 would begin on Shemini

Atzeret this year. That date would be this coming October 7th. So either October 7th or October 26th could be the day that the covenant is confirmed and Daniel's 70th 'week' begins.

The entire Seventy Weeks prophecy has a context and a scope. It pertains to "*thy people and thy holy city*" which is to say, the Jews and Jerusalem. Further, the whole point of the prophecy and its stated objectives are:

1. To finish the transgression,
2. To make an end of sins,
3. To make reconciliation for iniquity, (LXX has two provisions for iniquity: "blot out" and "make atonement")
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness,
5. To seal up vision and prophecy, and
6. To anoint the Most Holy.

Daniel 9:24

We've all heard stories about how "The Antichrist" makes a "seven year peace treaty" with Israel. I very seriously doubt it. Rather, I'm fully persuaded that Jesus the Messiah confirms His covenant, and that many of the details are in Ezekiel 36 and 37, which I discussed in yesterday's post ***The Peaceful People Who Dwell Safely***. Suffice to say, if the covenant is confirmed in October, the rapture should happen first.

But why September 18th? Because of Zechariah 8:19. This prophecy says: "*Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the **fast of the seventh**, and the fast of the tenth, shall be **joy and gladness and cheerful***

feasts *for the house of Judah.*" September 18th is Tishri 3 and the seventh month fast of Gedaliah. An interesting play on words (and as you probably know, there are puns in the Bible) is that the Last Trump at the feast of Trumpets is called the "Great Blowing" or *Teki'ah Gedolah.*

The true Jews properly anticipate national restoration. What we see with the Zionist "State of Israel" is a satanic counterfeit; a so-called regathering, but the people regathered are Turkish Khazars, NOT true Jews. Jesus warned us twice about "*those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan*." (Rev. 2:9, 3:9) See also the work done by Dr. Nathaniel Jeanson of ***Answers in Genesis*** where he did actual genetic research and brought receipts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tgzyWJzLfY

I believe there will be an "Awakening Blast" for true Israel in mid-September, and that the sealing of the 144,000 will be part of the confirmation of the "covenant with many" in October. King David will be resurrected and will shepherd the people in the wilderness. Many details are provided of explicit, literal promises that will be fulfilled. These are the people referred to in Ezekiel 38:8-11. For as you probably know, there are a lot of "prophecy teachers" who are saying "the tribulation begins when Russia invades Israel" but they don't have any specific group living peacefully. That difficulty is resolved if the peaceful people are established at the beginning of the 'week' and the Magog invasion occurs about 3½ years later. Also, demonizing Russia and casting Putin or Russia as Gog/Magog has its own set of fairly significant problems.

Anyway, that's why I think September 18th is an extremely probable date for our departure. If I'm correct, this means we all have ***less than three weeks*** to continue extending God's offer of reconciliation to our families, friends, neighbors and so forth. The night is coming when no man can work.

Are you ready?

The Aischynō Option

> And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
>
> *1 John 2:28*

"Partial rapture" is an uncomfortable possibility, generally rejected by our "prophecy experts" and seen as manifest judgmentalism. "*You're just trying to scare people. Jesus never gave a list of requirements for the rapture. He just said you must be a believer. The rapture is our 'blessed hope' and it's for every Christian,*" they protest. Well, yes and maybe. Let's take a deeper look at this.

And I want to say at the outset that I am also somewhat uncomfortable with the "partial rapture" position, though less than I used to be. But we can't simply ignore the explicit texts that deal with it, or the admonitions in scripture that suggest it. So let's try to be honest and see what the scripture says.

Jesus set the bar really low for the rapture. He gave just ONE requirement:

> Because you have **kept My command to persevere**, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
>
> *Rev. 3:10 NKJV (emphasis added)*

Those who keep His command to persevere may claim the promise. So the next question is, "what does 'persevere'

mean?" Can it be measured or quantified? Who decides how much "perseverance" is necessary, since we all slip up? Well, without being silly, let me suggest that if someone said, "*give me a definition of 'perseverance' or you will be shot at sunrise*" you would be able to come up with a very satisfactory definition. Continue, maintain, uphold, persist, abide, follow after Christ … lots of ideas come up and all will work. The New Testament is replete with expansion on this. As John wrote:

> But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and **you do not need that anyone teach you**; but as the same anointing teaches you **concerning all things**, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, **you will abide in Him**.
>
> *1 John 2:27 NKJV (emphases added)*

This takes away the "ignorance card." The tenor of the passage is that we are to abide in Christ, and "ignorance is no excuse." We all know this stuff.

I believe that the rapture IS for all believers. Jesus does not divide His body into "prime believers" and a "not quite good enough" group. He loves us all, we were ALL unworthy, He paid for ALL of our sins, and we ALL have a blessed hope. So, if it's for all of us, then who decides who goes and who stays?

WE do.

Surprised? Take another look at the top scripture quoted in this post. John said "***ashamed*** *before Him at His coming.*" The trumpet sounds and every believer hears it. The heavens are opened – the doorway to the Throne of God is visible. Jesus stands at the door in all His glory, and His blazing holiness lights up all of creation. A booming voice commands, "***Come***

up here!" And then what?

Some Christians, for whom Jesus Christ is their consuming passion, will eagerly obey the command and, literally, fly to Him. But what about those believers who have spent their lives in carnality? Those who have saving faith, but have not been transformed by the renewing of their minds, have not been conformed to the image of Christ, have not abided in Him, have not "persevered"?

What about them? John suggests they will "shrink back." They will choose to not go. ***THEY*** – not you, me or Jesus – will choose. In a sense, they make that choice every time they turn on the TV. They have sown their lives with habits that leave Jesus out. Their names are written in His book, but their lives — up to this point anyway — have been squandered. They can't bear to look at Him; they are totally engulfed by their own shame.

The Greek word John uses for "ashamed" is *aischynō* (pronounced ice WHO know) and it means "to disfigure, to dishonor, to suffuse with shame, make ashamed, be ashamed." **BlueLetterBible** suggests "*that we may not in shame **shrink from him***" which may be a literal, or perhaps idiomatic translation (they don't say). I can imagine the disfigured facial expression of someone who stands ashamed or acutely embarrassed when His Savior calls him and he's unprepared for the meeting.

No, on second thought, I really can't. And I really don't want to try.

The definition of *aischynō* also includes "to dishonor." Does that not jump out at you? If not, please re-read ***A Fuller Dignity*** and decide for yourself how this may pertain to rapture-readiness.

But God, Who is rich in mercy, still does not abandon them (our God truly is AWESOME!). They get the "crash course" this time. "*Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life*." (Rev. 2:10) Welcome to Smyrna/Thyatira – a remnant of the end-time church that will go through some "great tribulation" (Rev. 2:22). But it's short, the choice is clear and binary, and the rewards are astonishing.

> And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
>
> *Rev. 20:4 NKJV*

This is how things WILL play out for some.

In ***Adamantine Hearts*** I closed with three questions. The third question was "*we clearly DO see believers on the earth after the rapture. Who are they?*" I believe this is the answer to that question. These are "*the rest of her offspring,*" (Rev. 12:17), the saints who are overcome, (Rev. 13:7), those who "*keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*" (Rev. 14:12), and the victorious ones in Rev.15:2. My point is that these saints who are killed after the rapture were saved before the rapture. After the rapture, we see no repentance or lost people being saved.

There is a gospel proclamation after the rapture:

> Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation, tribe, tongue, and

> people — saying with a loud voice, "***Fear God and give glory*** *to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water*."
>
> *Rev. 14:6-7 NKJV (emphasis added)*

This is the "everlasting gospel" and not a message of salvation. It appears to be chronologically and conceptually connected to the "second woe" described in Rev. 11:13 where the survivors of a massive earthquake "*were* ***afraid and gave glory*** *to the God of heaven*."

Final note: many of the "prophecy experts" teach that the blessed hope in Titus 2:13 is the rapture and, specifically, our deliverance from the so-called "seven year tribulation period" which is NOT seven years long. Once again, the "experts" are off target. Our blessed hope is to be with Jesus Christ forever. Our hope is not an event; it's a Person. A focus on the event takes our eyes off Christ and puts the focus on our comfort. Those who, for whatever reason, choose to be left behind do not lose their blessed hope.

According To Your Faith

As you are no doubt aware, the eschatological community is divided on the question as to whether or not Christians will be on the earth during the “tribulation period” (usually understood as that period of time when the judgments described in Revelation are administered), or whether the Christians will be removed from earth before this period of time begins. Will we be faced with the choice of whether or not to take the Mark of the Beast? Or will we be removed from the earth by the rapture before the Mark and the global, digital economic system is deployed? When The Dragon is granted authority over every tribe, tongue and nation, will that include *US*?? (gulp!)

In Luke 21:36 Jesus counsels us to be watchful and prayerful, praying that we might be “counted worthy to escape.”

> *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to* ***escape all these things*** *that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*
>
> *Luke 21:36, NKJV (emphasis added)*

Escaping sounds pretty good. Maybe that’s our “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13).

Some think otherwise. I need not explore or explain all the reasons why people come down on one side or the other of this question. The reason is because it’s unnecessary: both sides may be correct. After all, Revelation 12 taken at face value shows the rapture and also shows a group identified as “the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” remaining on

earth. The Dragon curses those in heaven and makes war against those left behind. Additionally, we see in Rev. 15:2 those who have victory over the Beast and over his mark. Clearly, these people will be on the earth when the Beast system is deployed.

One resolution is that these people are unbelievers when the rapture happens, but suddenly become believers after the rapture. The rapture happens and then they "get it," or some of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses persuade them to believe in Jesus. I think both these attempted resolutions are extremely unlikely. First, those unbelievers left behind are sent a "strong delusion" because they have rejected the truth. They don't become tender toward God, but rather they are hardened against Him. Second, the 144,000 are NOT a global evangelism task force. Scripture says nothing about them evangelizing anyone. Rather, they follow the Lamb where-ever He goes. They are an entourage.

A more reasonable explanation is that "the rest of her offspring" are Christians who were not "counted worthy to escape." This may sound arrogant or judgmental, but it's not. People decide for themselves whether or not they are worthy, and they act according to their decision. A stark Biblical example is recorded in Acts 13:46, where Paul and Barnabas preached the word to the Jews in Antioch (this was a city in western Turkey, not the city of the same name in Syria). By refusing to accept the message of grace by faith, these people *disqualified themselves* from the blessing of everlasting life.

> *On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the*

*things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and **judge yourselves unworthy** of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'*

Acts 13:44-47 NKJV (emphasis added)

Paul did not judge them, nor did God. The Jews judged *themselves* unworthy and reaped the results.

Jesus was consistent with His message, "may it be done to you according to your faith" or words to that effect. You receive what you believe. Faith triggers the divine response. Anything is possible to those who ***believe***. Go through the gospels and look at the miracles of Jesus. Almost without exception the presence of faith is explicitly stated or strongly implied. Conversely, Jesus could not do many miracles when there was strong unbelief (Matt. 13:58, Mark 6:5-6).

There are, within the Christian community, a LOT of folks who push back against the idea that the rapture will happen before this "tribulation period" begins. If they don't have faith in Jesus to deliver them from the tribulation that's coming, then will He deliver them? If a rapture deliverance is offered but must be believed and received by faith, will someone who does not believe be delivered? Or will he be left on earth?

Jesus said, "*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on*

the earth." What's your response? Faith or unbelief? Jesus offers to keep you from the trial. Do you believe Him?

I think this is the case**:** you are worthy of rapture if you trust Jesus to deliver you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world. If you don't believe, then you can't receive, and you will be left behind.

> Jesus said to them, "*Do you believe that I am able to do this?*" They said to Him, "*Yes, Lord.*" Then He touched their eyes, saying, "***According to your faith let it be to you***." And their eyes were opened.
>
> *Matthew 9:28-30 NKJV (emphasis added)*

This would certainly explain Rev. 12:7 and following scriptures that show Christians on the earth after the rapture, and it does not force "worthy" into becoming in any way meritorious. If we are justified, NOT by works but by belief in Jesus as the Justifier, it seems consistent that we will be delivered, NOT by works, but by belief in Jesus as the Deliverer.